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THE BENEI MITZVAH PROGRAM



FAMILY HANDBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

Mazal Tov on your upcoming simcha! We are delighted to share with you the excitement of seeing your child attain the status of *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah*. The planning of the actual *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* ceremony always brings up many questions, and we hope this handbook will answer many of these questions as well as guide you through the *Benei Mitzvah* program. We hope to facilitate your family's involvement with Temple Israel and to enhance the experience of your child's *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah*.

Glossary of Terms relating to *Benei Mitzvah*

ALIYAH (Plural: *aliyot*) – Literally, “going up” – The ascent to the *Bimah* to recite the blessings over the Torah reading.

AMIDAH – Literally, the “standing” prayer. The *Sh'ma* and the *Amidah* form the central prayer elements in Jewish liturgy. The *Amidah* is also referred to as *Tefillah*, “the prayer,” and *Sh'moneh Esreh* (“18,” referring to the 18 blessings originally recited in the weekday *Amidah*).

ARON HA-KODESH – or simply *Aron*: the Holy Ark in which the Torah scrolls are kept.

BAR or **BAT MITZVAH** (plural: *Benei Mitzvah*) – One who has attained the age of responsibility to observe the commandments as an adult Jew and to be held accountable for Jewish ritual and ethical behavior. Traditionally girls became *Bat Mitzvah* at 12 years of age and boys at 13. At Temple Israel we mark *Benei Mitzvah* for both girls and boys at 13.

BIMAH – The raised dais in the sanctuary from which services are conducted.

CHUMASH – The Hebrew name of the Five Books of Moses, printed in book form. The word *Chumash* means ‘five’, encompassing the books of *B'reishit* (Genesis), *Sh'mot* (Exodus), *Vayikra* (Leviticus), *B'midbar* (Numbers), and *D'varim* (Deuteronomy). Temple Israel uses the official *Chumash* of the Conservative movement, *Etz Hayim*, which contains the Hebrew and English texts of the weekly Torah portions and *Haftarot* (selections from the Prophets), as well as traditional and modern commentaries.

D'VAR TORAH – Literally, a “word of Torah,” a brief commentary on the Torah portion for the week.

GABBAI – One of the people responsible for giving out honors at *Shabbat* services, or responsible for checking to ensure the Torah is read correctly.

G'MILUT HASADIM – Deeds of loving kindness incumbent upon all Jews.

HAFTARAH (plural: *Haftarot*) – literally, “completion”: the reading of a selection from the Prophets for a given *Shabbat* or festival, which “completes” or concludes the Torah reading. Usually, the *Haftarah* reading is connected thematically to the weekly Torah reading.

KAVOD – “honor”: generally referring to a *bimah* honor such as opening the *aron* (ark), removing from or returning a Torah to the *aron*, reading from the Torah, or carrying a Torah.

MA'ARIV – The evening service.

MACHON – The pre-*Benei Mitzvah* family *Shabbat* service for children in the *Hay*, *Vav*, and *Zayin* (5th, 6th and 7th grade) classes; derived from the word *Mechinah*, which means preparation. The weekly *Tefillah* or prayer group for the oldest Kulanu Religious School students is also referred to as “*Machon*.”

MAFTIR – Last section of the weekly Torah portion. The person called up to recite the blessings for reading the *Maftir* usually chants the *Haftarah* (reading from the Prophets).

MINCHAH – The afternoon service.

MITZVAH (plural, *mitzvot*) – A commandment or obligation the Torah places upon all Jews from the age of their *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah*.

MUSAF – The “additional” service in the traditional liturgy of *Shabbat*, festivals, and the New Moon, which follows the Torah service.

PARASHAH – (The more complete term is: *parashat hashavua*) – Literally “the Torah portion of the week,” sometimes referred to as the *sedra*.

SHACHARIT – The morning service.

SIMCHA – Literally “joy,” *simcha* refers to a happy occasion, especially a life-cycle event.

TEFILLAH – Prayer.

TIKKUN OLAM – Literally “repairing the world,” this term, originally applied to the performance of any *mitzvah* with the intention of redeeming sparks of divinity trapped in everyday objects, is now more broadly understood to apply to actions taken to improve society or redress social, economic or ecological problems.

TORAH – Literally, “teaching” or instruction. Narrowly, Torah refers to the Five Books of Moses. Broadly, Torah includes all Jewish sacred literature.

TROPE/TA'AMEI HA-MIKRA – The notes and cantillation for Torah, *Haftarah* and the *Megillot*, which enable a student to read any section of these texts throughout the year.

TZEDAKAH – Literally, “righteousness.” It is the *mitzvah* of giving time or money to a worthy cause. (*Benei Mitzvah* and their families traditionally give *Tzedakah* in honor of the occasion).

Becoming *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah*

Becoming *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* is a spiritual rite of passage. It is not a single event, but a milestone in a child's ongoing religious education and lifelong engagement with and commitment to living as a Jew. Becoming *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* in Jewish tradition indicates that a child is now a member of the Jewish community. This status carries with it certain privileges, obligations, and responsibilities. While becoming *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* is attained automatically by virtue of age, this change in legal status only becomes meaningful in the context of adequate preparation and study.

To that end, Temple Israel offers rich classroom learning, engaging family prayer services, and ongoing opportunities for our children and their families to participate in *Tikkun Olam/Mitzvah* projects, as well as individual *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* instruction. We provide multiple opportunities for life-long Jewish education through our outstanding *Beth HaGan* early childhood program; our innovative, "Re-Imagined" Kulanu Religious School; the dynamic Waxman High School and Youth House, and a rich array of adult learning programs through the Temple Israel Institute for Life-long Learning (TILL).

Once your child has become *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah*, the next step in the life-long process of learning and living Jewishly is to continue his or her Jewish education at the Waxman High School, which serves to reinforce his or her Jewish identity both socially and academically. In addition to the Waxman High School, there is a strong youth activities program at the Youth House, including many retreats as well as social, religious and *Tikkun Olam*/social action programs.

How Dates are Chosen

Parents and families will be notified about *Benei Mitzvah* dates two to three years prior to the ceremony, at the Parents' *Benei Mitzvah* Orientation. The *Benei Mitzvah* Committee Chairperson assigns the dates, in consultation with the Rabbis, the Hazzan and the Director of Congregational Schools. Every effort is made to schedule *Benei Mitzvah* to take place on, or as soon as possible following, your child's thirteenth birthday according to the Hebrew calendar. *However, due to the large number of Benei Mitzvah students, occasionally Benei Mitzvah are scheduled prior to the students' Hebrew birth dates. If it is important for you that the Bar or Bat Mitzvah not take place prior to your child's Hebrew birthday, please contact Benei Mitzvah Committee Chairperson, Marc Langsner, 516-356-4067 ; marclangsner@gmail.com, as quickly as possible.*

Unless specifically requested, dates are generally not assigned in the summer or over long weekends such as Memorial Day, Labor Day or Thanksgiving weekend, as we can't guarantee that the clergy will be present on those occasions. Furthermore, dates are not assigned during school breaks, on *Shabbat Shuvah* (the *Shabbat* between *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*), on the *Shabbat* between *Yom Kippur* and *Sukkot*, or on the *Shabbatot* that fall during *Sukkot*, *Pesach*, and *Shavuot*.

Because of the number of *Benei Mitzvah* students, it is often necessary to "pair" two students together on a *Shabbat* morning. If your child is paired with another student, we recommend that you contact and/or meet with the other family. There are many instances where cooperation between the paired families is mutually beneficial, including thoughts about the service, pre-date photographs, and *Kiddush*. We will provide the name and phone number of the other family when you receive your child's *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* date.

***Benei Mitzvah* Timeline and Important Deadlines**

5-7 years before:	★	Families begin attending <i>Shabbat Ha-Mishpachah</i> and Jr. Congregation services.
	★	Students enroll in Kulanu Religious School, <i>Gahelet</i> or Day School. - Students are invited to chant verses of Torah as part of Torah Troupe in <i>Shabbat ha Mishpacha</i> during Shabbat morning family services.
2-3 years before:	★	<i>Benei Mitzvah</i> dates are assigned at a parent orientation session.
	★	If sharing assigned date, families are encouraged to call one another.
2 years before:	★	Trope lessons begin during Kulanu Religious School classes.
1-2 years before: (during 6th & 7th Grades)	★	6th Grade students have the opportunity to enroll in Hazzan Shamash's <i>Tefillah</i> Enrichment Program, which will prepare them to partner in leading services.
	★	7th Grade students work on group <i>Mitzvah</i> projects.
1 year before:	★	Introductory group learning sessions begin. The students and their families will attend 5 meetings in the Sanctuary on Sunday mornings where they will practice wearing tallit and t'fillin and experience being part of the morning <i>minyan</i> . Students will receive their study materials, and will begin a review of learning techniques.
11 months before (optional)	★	6th grade students will have an opportunity to attend a weekly 50 minute lab class with their peers.
6-8 months before:	★	The student begins lessons with their Torah and <i>Haftarah</i> instructor. At least one parent or guardian is required to attend sessions.
	★	The family decides on roles for participation in the <i>Bar</i> or <i>Bat Mitzvah</i> service, including if anyone will read from the Torah. Arrangements are made for tutoring of other family members.
	★	If sharing a ceremony with another family, contact each other to coordinate efforts (<i>Kiddush</i> , leading prayers, Torah reading).

3 months before:	☆	The student begins preparing their <i>D'var Torah</i> with either Rabbi Schweber or Avi Siegel. Parents are required to attend the first session and are encouraged to attend additional sessions.
	☆	Families are expected to attend one Friday night learning session and one Saturday morning learning session beginning 30 minutes prior to each service. Call extension 1109 to confirm attendance. (optional) Families can progress into the next stage of the <i>Tefillah</i> Enrichment Program by attending at least 3 Friday night learning sessions and 3 Saturday morning learning session 30 minutes prior to each service.
6-8 weeks before:	☆	The Synagogue office sends an email to make you aware of the schedule for the next two months and to remind you of any contact information you may need.
	☆	An email will be sent requesting information and a photograph for the Voice. The form and photo must be returned approximately 5 weeks before your event.
4-6 weeks before:	☆	The Synagogue office will schedule a family meeting with the Senior Rabbi, Howard Stecker. Your child should bring his or her <i>D'var Torah</i> . Your honors forms will be sent to you prior to this meeting, and you should bring them if you have questions.
	☆	The family should contact the Synagogue office to arrange for payment of <i>Kiddush</i> .
	☆	(optional) The family can contact the Synagogue office to schedule a family photo shoot in the main Sanctuary (The family must provide the photographer).
		(optional) The family orders personalized <i>kippot</i> and doilies from an outside vendor, if desired.
Two weeks before:	☆	Completed honors card and <i>bimah</i> questionnaire due at the Synagogue office.
	☆	The family attends a “run-through” service takes place in the Sanctuary with Hazzan Shamash, including a practice reading from the Torah.
During week before:	☆	Drop off <i>kippot</i> (and/or doilies and framed invitation) to the Synagogue office by noon on Friday.
	☆	The <i>Gabbai</i> contacts the family regarding the assignment of honors.

KULANU RELIGIOUS SCHOOL/JEWISH EDUCATION ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

Standards of Jewish Education

We remain steadfast in our commitment to the Jewish education of all of our members, as outlined in our Vision for Education. We take to heart our mission to educate the next generation of Conservative Jews. To this end, member families with Kulanu Religious School aged children are invited and encouraged to enroll in Kulanu Religious School; engage in the Synagogue community, and participate in our numerous *Shabbat*, holiday, and family education opportunities.

We emphasize classroom learning; shared family *Shabbat* and holiday experiences, as well as other family education opportunities; student Tefillah (prayer) experiences; professional development for teachers, and ongoing evaluation of all aspects of education. In order to prepare our students to be knowledgeable Jews, and to engage in Jewish community life as they grow, we expect our students to participate in at least six continuous years of Jewish education.

Programs of Jewish Education Endorsed by Temple Israel:

In order for your child to be eligible to receive *Benei Mitzvah* training and celebrate a Saturday morning *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* at Temple Israel, you must be a member in good standing at Temple Israel, and your child needs to be enrolled in and attending one of the following programs:

- ✧ Temple Israel Kulanu Religious School;
- ✧ An accredited Jewish Day School or *Yeshiva*;
- ✧ The *Gahelet* Israeli School;
- ✧ Private tutoring (only for students with demonstrable special needs);
- ✧ Any of the above programs through the sixth grade, and either the Waxman Hebrew High School or the JTS Ivry Prozdor program during seventh grade.

In the absence of your child's participation in one of these education programs, please speak to Rabbi Roth (RabbiRoth@tign.org) about the possibility of a weekday *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah*.

SHABBAT PROGRAMS

Description of Programs

The *Shabbat Ha-Mishpachah* (Family *Shabbat*) Program is an essential component of the Kulanu Religious School. It incorporates lively, interactive services that allow both children and parents to learn about and experience engaging prayer and Torah; individual grade-level learning for students through discussions and games; meaningful adult learning for parents; and the opportunity to build community over meals or refreshments.

Shabbat Ha-Mishpachah services focus on specific age cohorts, and each age group prepares for three experiences: Friday Night, Saturday morning, or Saturday afternoon. This is a family program, and children must be accompanied by a parent. The goals of these services are to help acquaint children and their families with the essentials of Jewish prayer in preparation for not only the *Benei Mitzvah* experience, but also for full participation in Jewish life as teens and adults; to help families connect to the Synagogue and the larger Jewish community; and to provide a joyful, inviting context for prayer that will encourage ongoing participation.

The program is open to all Temple Israel families, regardless of whether they attend the Kulanu Religious School. Gaheret, Day School, Yeshiva students, and those receiving private tutoring are also expected to participate. The schedule of the *Shabbat Ha-Mishpachah* services can be found in the Kulanu Religious School calendar.

Other Services: In addition, as members of the Youth House, 7th graders are welcome and encouraged to attend all Youth House Shabbat and Holiday services and dinners. On weeks when there is no *Shabbat Ha-Mishpachah*, Machon-aged students (those in grades 5-6) may attend Jr. Congregation (usually for grades K-4) and receive credit. Students are always welcome to attend main sanctuary services at the Synagogue, and can earn credit for each of those services.

Attendance Requirements

Students in grades K-7 are expected to fulfill the minimum service attendance requirements as described in the TIGN Passport to Jewish Family Life and the Kulanu Religious School Family Handbook (at least 8 services each year). At least one parent or grandparent must attend services with their children in order for the children to receive credit. Attendance binders are available at each service, and awards are given at the end of the year to all students who meet or exceed the Synagogue's service attendance standards. Parents should be aware that their child's knowledge of and comfort with traditional Jewish prayer will be dramatically enhanced by frequent Shabbat and holiday attendance. The only successful way for a child to learn the melodies and words of Jewish prayers is by actively and regularly participating in them. In addition, all students through grade 7 are also expected to attend at least five Family Education programs with a parent or grandparent each year.

Guidelines for *Benei Mitzvah*

Eligibility for *Benei Mitzvah* training calls for a minimum of six years of uninterrupted formal Jewish education, including the year of *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* instruction. Educational requirements may be fulfilled through any of the programs specified on page 6.

All students enrolled in Temple Israel's Kulanu Religious School need to satisfy school attendance requirements in order to be eligible for *Benei Mitzvah* training. Additionally, students who:

- ☆ Complete the *Zayin* (7th grade) class prior to their *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* must be officially enrolled in and attending the Waxman Hebrew High School program, Prozdor or a Jewish Day School or Yeshiva at the time of their *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah*, even if they have already completed six or more years of Jewish education;
- ☆ Have celebrated their *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* prior to the completion of the *Zayin* grade are expected to complete the *Zayin* year in a formal program of Jewish study, even if they have already completed six or more years of Jewish education;
- ☆ Leave a Jewish Day School or Yeshiva at any point prior to the completion of 7th grade are expected to continue their Jewish education, in a format to be determined with the Kulanu Religious School or Waxman High School administration on a case-by-case basis.

Cooperation and Communication:

In an effort to foster communication, participation, and accountability in keeping with our shared Vision for Education, the Kulanu Religious School, Youth House and Temple Israel agree that, when appropriate, the Synagogue and school will communicate with families when issues of concern arise. After communicating with families, recommendations may be made to:

1. Call students' homes where patterns of absenteeism from school and/or Shabbat and family programs are noted;
2. Request a conference with the student and family;
3. Withhold assignment of *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* ceremony dates until/unless discernible good faith efforts are made to meet educational expectations;
4. Delay or suspend *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* preparatory tutoring;
5. Withdraw and/or reassign a previously assigned date for the *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* ceremony.

BENEI MITZVAH PROGRAM OF STUDY

Trope/TaAmei ha Mikra Classes

During the *Hay* and *Vav* (5th and 6th grade) years of Kulanu Religious School, your child will study the Torah trope and *Haftarah* trope respectively. By mastering these skills, students will be capable of chanting any Torah or *Haftarah* portions during the year. Our goal is to teach our children these skills before they start their individual tutoring. Torah and *Haftarah* cantillation is not only an important feature of our Middle School curriculum, but it is also a significant Synagogue skill that your child will be able to use throughout his or her life.

Benei Mitzvah Family Workshop

Regardless of whether or not they attend the Kulanu Religious School, during their *Vav* or *Zayin* year (6th or 7th grade respectively) all Temple Israel students participate in a series of workshops that take place over two Sundays. The workshops are taught in two or more cycles, and students are assigned to attend a workshop cycle based on their *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* date. Parents are urged to attend the workshop together with their children in order to experience shared parent-child learning, and to be better prepared for their child's *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah*. If at least one parent attends these workshops with their child, the student will receive Family Education credit. In this course, students will learn and discuss the following:

- ✧ Why thirteen?
- ✧ The role of Mitzvot in our lives and the meaning of *Bar Mitzvah* and *Bat Mitzvah*.
- ✧ How to navigate our Synagogue's *Chumash*, and an overview of other great Jewish books.
- ✧ Explanation of the Torah reading cycle.
- ✧ *Benei Mitzvah* technical terms, e.g. Torah, *maftir*, *haftarah*, *aliyah*, *kavod*, etc.
- ✧ Understanding God.
- ✧ Conservative Judaism in comparison to Orthodoxy and Reform.

School Tefillah Sessions, Teaching Tallit and Tefillin

The Director of Congregational Schools and the clergy lead weekly *Tefillah* (prayer) sessions for all students during Kulanu Religious School to familiarize them with the key prayers of the Shabbat and weekday services, as well as the structure and meaning of the prayer service. *Zayin* (7th grade) students participate in weekly *Tefillah* sessions at the Youth House.

Since Temple Israel is an egalitarian Conservative Synagogue, both male and female *Zayin* students are instructed in wearing *Tallit* and *Tefillin* during these sessions. *Vav* (6th grade) students also receive instruction on *Tallit* and *Tefillin* as part of the regular Kulanu Religious School program in the spring.

Tefillah Enrichment Program

During their *Vav* (6th grade) year, interested students may participate in a class on the prayers of the *Kabbalat Shabbat* service, taught by Hazzan Shamash. The class takes place from 11:45 AM to 12:20 PM on Sunday mornings, and is open to all 6th graders who are members of Temple Israel and are receiving some form of formal Jewish education. A parent must accompany each participant. Students who complete the class conduct a *Kabbalat Shabbat* service for the Synagogue at the end of their 6th grade school year, have the opportunity to lead *Kabbalat Shabbat* and *Kiddush* on the eve of their *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah*, and are invited to participate in future *Kabbalat Shabbat* services at Temple Israel. Students who complete this program with a parent will receive two Family Education credits.

INDIVIDUAL BAR OR BAT MITZVAH TRAINING

Training to Chant Torah and *Haftarah*

Temple Israel provides approximately seven months of individual instruction in Torah and *Haftarah* chanting. Depending on the date of the *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* ceremony, training may begin as much as ten months in advance to account for vacation time. The Hazzan oversees this program and is responsible for assigning tutors.

A Torah tutor will contact parents 8-10 months prior to the *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* to begin weekly lessons. They will schedule approximately 30 weekly sessions with your child to help him/her gain proficiency in their scriptural readings. At least one adult is asked to attend sessions with their child.

Students will receive training in the following skills:

- 1) Each student will learn both the *Haftarah* and the *Maftir* portion of the Torah, as well as the Torah and *Haftarah* blessings. We additionally encourage our students to learn to read as much Torah as possible.
- 2) 2) Students may have additional opportunities to lead selected prayers or sections of the service, depending on their level of training and preparedness. Additional prayers or sections may include the chanting of *Shema* and the 1st and 3rd biblical paragraphs following it (*V'ahavta* and *Vayomer*); and the recitation of *borei p'ri hagafen* over the wine, the blessings *n'tilat yadayim* (for hand washing) and/or *hamotsi* over the *challah* at the conclusion of services. Students who participated in the *Tefillah* Enrichment Program during their *Vav* year will also be offered the opportunity to lead the *Kabbalat Shabbat* service and *Kiddush* on the Friday night preceding their *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah*. For any role the student plays in the service he or she will need to demonstrate proficiency with the readings and prayers to the Hazzan in advance.

The following guidelines will pertain when two *Benei Mitzvah* share the service:

- 1) We teach the entire *Haftarah* to each student, since we strongly believe in the value of studying the full text.
- 2) The *Haftarah* is divided between the two students. The first *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* will read the blessings before the *Haftarah* and the first half of the *Haftarah*, and the second *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* will read the second half of the *Haftarah*, and the blessings that follow it. Both *Benei Mitzvah* will conclude by chanting the last paragraph of the blessings together.
- 3) The Hazzan, in coordination with the *Benei Mitzvah* tutors, will determine the order of the chanting.

Preparation of *D'Var Torah*

Every student will begin *D'var Torah* preparations on an individual basis with either Youth House Director Avi Siegel, or Rabbi Daniel Schweber, who will contact you about 3 months before the *Bar or Bat Mitzvah* to schedule meetings with your child. Each student will study their Torah and *Haftarah* portions in English, and will answer questions pertaining to the Torah and *Haftarah* with their instructor, in order to develop an initial outline of a *D'var Torah*. At least one parent is asked to attend the first *D'var Torah* session with their child.

There are multiple educational and spiritual goals of the *D'var Torah* preparation process:

- ✧ To teach the student a fundamental understanding of the contents of the readings.
- ✧ To teach the meaning and significance of the readings in their biblical context and in later rabbinic interpretation.
- ✧ To help students find personal spiritual meaning and connection between their own lives and the themes, teachings, or insights of the readings.
- ✧ To effect spiritual growth and elevation in the student.

While we encourage you to work actively with your child, the *D'var Torah* ideas and language must come from the student. You may offer guidance, but the *D'var Torah* must reflect the student's own work, not the parent's.

Tzedakah and G'milut Hasadim

We encourage our *Benei Mitzvah* to accept their new responsibilities as Jewish adults, paving the way for them to be committed to a lifetime of *G'milut Hasadim* (deeds of loving kindness). Each *Bar or Bat Mitzvah* student is encouraged to research and then select a meaningful *tzedakah* project to which he or she will contribute specifically in honor of his or her upcoming *simcha* (monetary contributions can be made to the same organization with which the student does the *mitzvah* project).

Students are also encouraged to inform their guests of their project and invite them to participate in it. *Benei Mitzvah* may provide fliers and information about their selected *tzedakot* to be placed on the tables outside the Sanctuary on the day of their ceremony.

BENEI MITZVAH GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

Here at Temple Israel we believe that everyone can find their way to Torah and Blessing. We look to give our students opportunities to refine their skills and grow closer to Judaism. Here are the programs we ask your child to participate in:

Torah Troupe

Students are invited to chant verses of Torah as part of our Torah Troop in *Shabbat Mishpacha* during Shabbat morning family services. The preparation and learning is achieved during the Kulanu Religious School experience and individualized practice.

Sunday Brunch N' Learn

Sunday mornings from 8:55am - 10:10am in the Sanctuary. The first 30 minutes begins with *tallit*, *tefillin*, and prayer participation in the *minyan*. The remaining time continues with bagels, snacks & group lesson including a review of learning materials, trope mastery exercises, prayer study techniques, and more.

Students are invited to attend small group learning sessions, participate in the Sunday morning *minyan*, and practice putting on *tallit* and *tefillin* with Hazzan Shamash. These sessions provide valuable introductory study including review of learning materials, trope mastery exercises, prayer study techniques, and the teaching of Torah and *haftarah* blessings. Parents will also be encouraged to engage in the Torah trope learning and can also accept Torah reading assignments.

Lab Class

Students must participate in a minimum of five fifty-minute sessions at the learning lab. This is a wonderful opportunity for students to practice in a group with their peers as they all begin their studies, and it additionally provides guided self-study time as well. The lab class introduces use of computer, tablet, and cell phone applications that can make a great difference for accelerating and deepening the study processes.

Friday Night Rejoice & Saturday Morning Revelations

Three months prior to the *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* students are asked to attend at least 3 Friday and 3 Saturday morning learning sessions 30 minutes before services. The camaraderie and *chevruta* leads to a joyful experience interacting in the space of the Sanctuary, learning about the choreography of services, while building their voices, presence, and comfort.

Joining us for the Friday Night and Saturday Morning Learning Sessions in the Sanctuary helps your child to prepare for services while practicing the joyful and meditative melodies of the prayers. Afterwards they may join Hazzan Shamash at the podium to help lead any of the prayers they are comfortable with.

This experience gives your child the opportunity to share in the joyous inspiration of learning the deeper meaning and practice their favorite Shabbat prayers, while also giving them assistance with any prayers they may need help with. It is also a chance to practice transitioning through the movements of the service, blending and experiencing vocal support making them ready at home on the *bima*.

BENEI MITZVAH CEREMONY

Aliyot and other Honors

About 2 months prior to the ceremony, the Synagogue office will mail you a complete list of instructions including contact information, deadlines for the Voice, when to expect the *aliyot paperwork* and other honors your family may receive during the service. These forms will be sent to you gradually within the coming weeks. **All honors forms must be returned to the Temple office by a minimum of ten business days prior to the ceremony.** Please understand that the service includes the entire congregation, whose members with *yahrzeits*, baby namings, *auf rufs*, etc., also have a right to individual honors. The Synagogue reserves two Torah blessings (*Aliyot*) per family, in addition to the honors for our *Benei Mitzvah* students. Usually, parents or grandparents receive these honors, but, of course, you may select other family members. Other honors, such as Ark openings, carrying the Torah, *hagbahah* (lifting the Torah) and *gelilah* (rolling and wrapping the Torah) may be given to your family members. Family members who are called to the Torah must be Jewish and be capable of reading their *berakhot* properly.

Family Participation in Service

We encourage parents, older siblings and other relatives to read from the Torah. Younger (as well as older) siblings may participate by leading designated prayers (*Ashrei*, *Ein Keloheinu*, *Aleinu*, and *Adon Olam*). If family members wish to participate, please contact the Hazzan as early as possible, but no later than when your child

begins studying with the Torah and *Haftarah* tutor. Please remember that any family members who wish to participate in the service will need to demonstrate proficiency with the readings and prayers to the Hazzan in advance.

Kippot

To honor the sanctity of the Synagogue, all males are required to wear *kippot* in the Sanctuary (it is customary to do so at all times everywhere in the building), and females are encouraged to cover their heads, especially inside the sanctuary. Many families choose to order personalized *kippot* to be placed outside the Sanctuary for their guests to use. Please contact the Synagogue office for names of suppliers. The inscription should contain only the English/Hebrew name of the child, the English/Hebrew date of the service, and, if you choose, "Temple Israel of Great Neck." The *kippot* must be given to our Executive Director in a basket by noon on Friday. The basket will be placed on a table outside of the Sanctuary on Saturday morning. You may supply your own tablecloth if you wish.

Tallitot

Jewish males age 13 and above are expected to wear a *tallit*, and Jewish females age 13 and above are encouraged to wear a *tallit*, during all morning services. While the Synagogue provides *tallitot*, it is customary and desirable for each adult Jew to own his or her own *tallit*. To that end, parents or other family members may purchase a *tallit* for their child to wear on this special occasion, and in the future. The Synagogue's Sisterhood gift shop has a wide selection of beautiful *tallitot* and is happy to order additional ones to suit your needs.

Tefillin

Traditionally, *Benei Mitzvah* have also marked the occasion by putting *Tefillin* on during a weekday service. If you are interested in doing this, either the week before your simcha or at another time, contact Rabbi Schweber.

Invitations

Please include the following information in your invitation:

- ☆ The starting time of the service, which is 9:00 AM.
- ☆ The name of the Torah portion as well as your child's Hebrew name. As a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a Jewish/religious occasion, the invitation should reflect the spirit of the day.
- ☆ Printed information cards with rules about decorum on one side and directions on the other can be obtained from the Synagogue office. You are encouraged to include these with your invitations. Please request them from the office at least two weeks prior to mailing your invitations.

Synagogue Decorum

The entire Synagogue building is a "*Makom Kadosh*" – a holy place. Please encourage your guests (especially teenagers) to dress and behave appropriately in the Synagogue and to remain in the Sanctuary as much as possible.

Dress: Examples of attire that is inappropriate for the Synagogue are bare shoulders and midriffs, extremely short skirts or revealingly low-cut dresses or blouses, as well as blue jeans, sweat pants, tee shirts, shorts, flip-flops and sneakers.

Electronic Devices: Please turn off your cell phone before entering the Synagogue, and ask your guests to do the same. Cell phones, pagers, cameras, games and other electronic devices may not be used in the building on *Shabbat* or Jewish holidays.

Applause and Conversing During the Service: The *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* takes place in the context of a worship service. It is not a performance. We therefore ask our congregants and guests to please refrain from applauding during the service. We ask that you wait until after the service to greet friends and relatives, and otherwise refrain from talking during the service.

Bringing In or Removing Items on *Shabbat*: Packages, gifts, cameras, food and liquor are not to be brought into or taken out of the building on *Shabbat*.

Smoking: Smoking is not permitted in our building at any time. Smoking is not permitted on *Shabbat* or Jewish holidays anywhere on our grounds.

Throwing Candy: We ask that the congregation not throw candy at the *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* during the service. Instead, the rabbi tosses a few candies towards the *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* at the conclusion of their chanting of the *Haftarah* and its blessings. This eliminates the risk of injury.

We request that all guests respect our Synagogue, our rituals and our property. If you can convey this message to your guests, we are sure your ceremony will be more meaningful. These rules are all enumerated in the decorum cards (mentioned previously in “Invitations”) that the Synagogue will be happy to supply.

Family Pictures

If you want to have your photographer take family pictures in the Sanctuary, please contact the Synagogue office *at least* one month ahead of your ceremony to make an appointment for an appropriate day, as *Halacha* (Jewish law) precludes photography on *Shabbat*. If you wish to take pictures with the Torah, please inform the Synagogue office at the time you make your photography arrangements and we will do our best to accommodate you. Please be aware that the ark is kept locked and arrangements must be made with the office to open it.

Kiddush

Temple Israel and its congregation is celebrating this most beautiful and meaningful event in your life with you and your family. The entire congregation is invited to attend the *Kiddush* after every *Shabbat* morning service. Therefore we require all *Benei Mitzvah* families to make a contribution to our weekly congregational *Kiddush* Fund. In the announcement section of the weekly *Shabbat* pamphlet, we will mention that your family has made a contribution in honor of your child’s *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah*. If your family and guests are staying for *Kiddush*, the *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* family is expected to sponsor the entire base *Kiddush*. Several levels of upgraded menu options are also available. Please contact Marion Stein in the Synagogue office, 482-7800, ext. 1106, for details and a menu of choices.

For the current fees, see “Benei Mitzvah Fees” on page 16.

Service Rehearsals

Four to ten weeks before your child’s *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah*, your family will be invited to come to a group “run-through” with the Hazzan in the Sanctuary, which will include an overview of the structure of the service, practice of *aliyot*, instructions on *bimah* procedures, etc.

In the week prior to the ceremony, the *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* and their parents will meet with the Hazzan in the Main Sanctuary where the order of the service and Torah service will be reviewed. During this practice session, the child will chant part of his or her *Haftarah* and practice chanting from the Torah scroll. The *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* will also have the opportunity to practice the *D’var Torah* aloud into the microphone in a clear and slow manner so that he or she will be prepared for the actual delivery during the *Shabbat* service.

BENEI MITZVAH CELEBRATION

Kashrut

Becoming *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* marks a young Jew's assuming of the responsibility to follow the *mitzvot* and traditions of Judaism. Hence, it is only fitting that the celebration following the ceremony remains in keeping with Jewish tradition and values, including *kashrut* (the dietary laws).

Shabbat Observance

We also ask our members and their guests to be respectful of the sanctity of *Shabbat*, and to refrain from activities that would diminish that sanctity. Such activities include the use of cameras, phones, pagers, and any electronic devices such as iPads or iPods, cell phones, any form of audio or visual recorded media, in addition to candle lighting ceremonies, cash bars or caricature artists during *Shabbat* (e.g. before dark on Saturday night).

Omer

During the period of counting the *Omer*, from *Pesach* until *Shavuot*, certain restrictions may apply to celebrations. If your child is assigned a *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* date that falls within this period, you should consult with the Senior Rabbi at your earliest convenience.

Buses

Because of the limited amount of space in Temple Israel's parking lot, buses cannot be accommodated on *Shabbat* or Sunday mornings. Please instruct any bus company with whom you contract to park on Old Mill Road.

CATERING YOUR *SIMCHA*

It is Temple Israel's sincere hope that, should you choose to cater a party or festive meal of any kind as part of the celebration of your *simcha*, you will choose to do so at the Synagogue. Hopefully, our Synagogue's role in your family's life leading up to this *simcha* was significant, and choosing to celebrate your *simcha* at the Synagogue will enhance the meaning of your celebration for your family.

Lederman Caterers is the exclusive caterer at Temple Israel for all private functions, parties or affairs held anywhere in our Synagogue. While Lederman Caterers is prepared to supply a wide range of catered foods and/or beverage service to accompany the celebration of your *simcha*, they do so in the context of established agreements with Temple Israel. In planning your *simcha* celebration, we'd like you to be aware of the following:

- ✧ Only Lederman Caterers is permitted to supply catered food for any private party or function held at the Synagogue, regardless of whether your party or function is held in the Main Ballroom, Reception Room, Crystal Ballroom, Blue Room, or any other room. Please do not ask the Synagogue's staff, clergy or other Synagogue representative for permission to bring food in from any outside source to be served at your function or party at the Synagogue.
- ✧ Lederman Caterers is a separate, private, for-profit legal entity that has contractually been granted a license to use the Synagogue's facilities. The Synagogue's staff and clergy are not to be involved in your individual contractual discussions and negotiations with Lederman Caterers, regarding the cost or other aspects of your party or function.

- ☆ *Benei Mitzvah* families have a ninety (90) day exclusive period from the time they receive notification of their *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* date in which to engage the caterer's services for their date. Dates are released by the Synagogue to the *Benei Mitzvah* parents at the Parent Orientation Session. However, this period only bars non-Temple members from booking with the caterer for that date.
- ☆ Be aware that sometimes two (2) families are given the same *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* date, which means that two (2) children will share that date for their respective *Benei Mitzvah*. The caterer will book parties for Temple members on a "first come, first served" basis. Therefore, you are encouraged to speak with the caterer as soon as possible after you have been notified of your *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* date. Nevertheless, to try to accommodate the desires of Synagogue members who wish to celebrate their child's *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* with a private *Kiddush* immediately following the *Shabbat* service, the caterer may try to book one private *Kiddush* in the Main Ballroom, while a separate private *Kiddush* is served in the Reception Room for another party. It is also possible to sponsor the Congregational *Kiddush* in the Crystal Ballroom.
- ☆ Synagogue members who have been granted a non-*Shabbat* morning *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* service should be aware that the use of the Synagogue's Sanctuary for such an occasion is not permitted unless the services of the caterer are used for a party or function following thereafter.
- ☆ The Synagogue has a standing Catering Committee to assist our members with any questions or difficulties that may arise in the dealings between the caterer and the Synagogue and its members. If such assistance is desired, please call the Synagogue office for the name and telephone number of the Committee's Chairperson.

Benei Mitzvah Fees

Note: Various payment plans are available. Please contact the controller to arrange one. Current fees are:

- ☆ A \$1,500 preparation fee for your child's *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* training during the *Vav* and *Zayin* years. This fee covers the following expenses: tutoring for *trope*, tutoring for *parsha*, materials, and assistance with *D'var Torah*.
- ☆ The minimum contribution towards the *Kiddush* is \$500, regardless of whether you and your guests are attending the Congregational *Kiddush*. This fee goes towards the *Kiddush* fund to help offset the costs of *Kiddush* on days when no one is sponsoring.
- ☆ The cost for each guest for *Kiddush* is \$10 per person, in addition to the \$500 minimum contribution listed above.
- ☆ There are options to enhance the *Kiddush* for additional costs, i.e., adding food that is not included in our standard *Kiddush*. Please contact Marion Stein at extension 1106 or at MStein@tign.org in the synagogue office to see what other *Kiddush* options are available.
- ☆ If \$1,800 or more is spent on *Kiddush*, (including the \$500 *Kiddush* cost and enhancement charges), you will be considered a *Kiddush* Sponsor, and will be listed in Pulpit Announcements and Voice as such.
- ☆ Additional fee of \$750 will be charged for a non-*Shabbat* Morning *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* service.

Please be aware that all fees are subject to change.

Giving Opportunities

There are several opportunities for giving that are commonly used by *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* families:

The Educational Resource Fund – The recommended amount to donate to this fund is \$613 corresponding to the 613 *mitzvot* to fulfill. This fund further enhances the education of our children from pre-K through high school by giving our directors additional resources to support collaborative programming, academic enrichment and technology. You will receive a lovely hand crafted certificate, and will be listed in the Voice and the *Shabbat* leaflet.

The Waxman High School and Youth House Fund – Some families find that the Temple Israel Youth House inspires their children to continue embracing Judaism in their daily lives. A donation to the Youth House Fund goes towards scholarships for children that could otherwise not afford to go, offsetting and reducing the costs of group trips to Israel or other places, or towards equipment and programming that would otherwise be unaffordable.

The Tree of Life – Purchasing a leaf on Temple Israel's Tree of Life commemorates your *simcha* for years to come. The purchase of a leaf (available in 3 colors), a pomegranate, or a stone for the cost of \$360, \$720, or \$1,800 respectively, marks the joy of your event with a dedication to your loved ones.

Discretionary Funds – Rabbi Stecker, Rabbi Schweber, and Hazzan Shamash, are often given thanks through a donation to their various discretionary funds. Rabbi Stecker's fund is used primarily for *tzedakah* and to feed the hungry. Rabbi Schweber's fund is used to support Synagogue programs, and Hazzan Shamash's fund is used to supplement musical programs for the Synagogue. No amount is too small. Call the Synagogue office to find out how to donate to one of these funds.

For a complete list of funds or opportunities to give, contact Jamey Kohn at the Synagogue Office.

List of Contact Names

All Synagogue numbers are 516-482-7800 with the extension below:

CLERGY

Rabbi Howard Stecker ext. 1109 RabbiStecker@tign.org
Hazzan Brian Shamash ext. 1118 HazzanShamash@tign.org
Rabbi Daniel Schweber ext. 1113 RabbiSchweber@tign.org

SENIOR STAFF

Jamey Kohn, Executive Director ext. 1103 JKohn@tign.org
Rabbi Amy Roth, Director of Congregational Schools ext. 1110 RabbiRoth@tign.org
Avi Siegel, Director of the Waxman High School and Youth House ext. 1400 ASiegel@tign.org

COMMITTEES

Benei Mitzvah Committee:

Marc Langsner, *Benei Mitzvah* Chairperson, 516-356-4067; marclangsner@gmail.com

Kulanu Religious School Education Committee (RSEC):

Lauren Juceam, Lauren.Juceam@yahoo.com

Natali Matalon, NGM@NataliPerDiem.com

TUTOR

Rahel Musleah, Rahel.Musleah@gmail.com

CATERING

Leon Shayesteh, Lederman Catering, 516-466-2222; Leon@LedermanCaterers.com

For questions or issues regarding catering, please contact Marion Stein ext. 1106; MStein@tign.org

SISTERHOOD GIFT SHOP

Laura Bardash, 516-466-4297

Temple Israel of Great Neck Mission Statement

Temple Israel is an innovative, egalitarian, Conservative Synagogue. We exist to create and strengthen a community that preserves and fosters Jewish identity through prayer, education, community service and social activities, and to provide for the needs of congregants in every stage of the life cycle from generation to generation.

